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273 Nowadays nearly everybody buys yeast cakes in the bazaars, where they are sold very cheaply, but the old method of making the yeast is still known and employed by some of the older women. For five days before making the yeast the maker must not eat high meat or drink sour *chi* or the yeast will go bad; and it is thought that these prohibitions are the chief cause for people now buying it. The native yeast had six ingredients: the roots of two trees [824] which I could not identify, and the leaves of a gaultheria ground to powder mixed with powdered chilli and ginger and powdered millet and water. The whole is made into a cake and left to dry for three days.

All *chi* is not uniformly good; its goodness depends on the proportion of yeast and its proper distribution and the care taken in the arrangement of the basket. Some houses are noted for their consistently good or bad *chi*, the best being obtained from the Mandal's and Tafoor's and the worst at Jiroong's and, surprisingly enough, Datoop's. This is peculiar because both Mr. and Mrs. Datoop are very fond of *chi* and Mrs. Datoop is in all other respects the most obviously competent woman in the village. To prepare *chi* for drinking all that is necessary is to put the fermented grain into a bamboo container, *patyoot*, and upset boiling, [415] or nearly boiling, water on to it; the liquid is drunk through a specially narrow bamboo called *pahip*, which has one end cut so as to make a sort of filter to prevent the grains being sucked in at the same time as the liquid. The drink is quite pleasant, somewhat sweet and insidious; at a guess I should place the alcohol content at about the same as a strong beer or a light red wine. The *patyoot* is refilled with water at least three times and consequently the drink gets weaker as more is drunk. Until the water [431] is poured on the *chi* it is perfectly easy to handle and transport, and the presents of *chi* which take place on almost all formal occasions consist of a packet of the fermented grain wrapped in a cloth or held in a basket. Strained *chi*, which is the fermented grain given a single sousing of water and then drained in a wicker bag, is a delicacy and is very considerably stronger than the *chi* drunk through the straw. The Lepchas are also fond of *arak*, commercially distilled liquor, and usually buy it when they go to a place where it is obtainable.

Except in the poorest households, or on those occasions when one lot of *chi* has been exhausted and the next is not yet ready, adult Lepchas drink at least one *patyoot* of *chi* daily: if they did

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to him by his father, a black heifer called Katikmu, a present from his 'grandfather'[11] the second Dorjé Lapoon, and a tiny cardamum patch yielding half a maund, which was given to him by his mother's father, Lharibu Chujen. His twelve-year-old sister only possesses a single hen. Tempa's five-year-old daughter owns three chicks and a piglet. Only children, and the wives and children of the poorest people are the only ones not to possess any property. Land which is given as a gift can be given again as a gift provided it does not pass into the possession of people living under another Mandal; it cannot be sold without the permission of the Mandal and of the original owner.

All the land of Zongu belongs to the Maharajah and cannot be owned by anybody not of Lepcha blood. Transactions of land between residents inside Zongu need the consent of the Mandal, and if necessary the confirmation of the Court. In the event of a Lepcha from outside Zongu wishing to settle therein, he will apply to the Mandal in whose village he wishes to live, who will forward the request to Court. If the request is granted the Mandal will summon all his 'tenants' and instruct each of them to give the newcomer a strip of land; he himself will give a piece of uncleared forest. These pieces of land are really gifts; the immigrant only pays for them with a drink of *chi*. The Mandal, it is believed, will always be glad to get a new 'tenant'; the householders may dislike giving up their land, but there is nothing they can do about it. It is extremely rare for immigrants to arrive in this fashion; in the last thirty years only one such has come to Lingthem, and that was Katel, who followed home his runaway wife. Such strange men as do come to Zongu usually do so either through marriage or adoption.

vii

It is perhaps permissible to speculate a little on the historical development of the Lepchas of Zongu in regard to their food-getting habits. Primitive economies are usually divided into three

[11] Throughout this book I have put into quotation marks kinship terms when they are employed by the Lepchas in their extended meaning, in cases where they do not correspond to our classification. Thus the second Dorjé Lapoon is by our classification Chimpet's paternal grand-uncle; this actually has no corresponding term in Lepcha; and since both the two themselves and anybody else referring to them would call them 'grandfather' and 'grandson' I have consistently employed the Lepcha terminology.

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622 [736] his house lame orphaned Satéo and an invalid childless widower from Liklyang); he has to give more feasts than anybody else, and these feasts are expected to be better than those of ordinary people. The office carries with it certain privileges; the remission of house and seed tax, and the right to free labour, or *béti*. The Mandal has the right to three days' work a year from each household, but I do not think a careful tally is kept in Lingthem; Chala Mandal is not unreasonable in his demands and has I think free workers whenever he needs them.

Chala Mandal is a rather fat, benign-looking man of 59 with a mobile and expressive face and rather sardonically amused, twinkling little eyes; he has a small wen which, he explained, was the *tam-toom* of one of his parents while he was in the womb having killed a namprek-*fo* (a bird which developed a dewlap because it stole rice from the God Komsi*thing*). Compared with the other Lepchas of his age he is rather fat and short of breath; he suffers from lumbago, and is much distressed at his failure to produce a son. He has had in all four wives but only the last one, a widow, has been fertile; she bore him two daughters but of these the elder died and the surviving child is a baby.

Except that he had rather better food and clothes than his neighbours Chala was in no way distinguished as a child, or given preferential treatment; but as he grew up his parents and elders taught him how to talk to people politely and avoid evil words. When he was about fifteen he was taken by his 'grandfather' (actually his father's elder brother) to the then reigning Maharajah, and told how to address him. For three years he worked at the Court as a sort of groom, and then the reigning Maharajah died and was succeeded by the present Maharajah's elder brother. A month after his death Chala returned home. A little later an order came from the Court that he was to accompany the Maharajah on a long voyage; but together with his father, his 'grandfather,' and an old white-haired lama from Talung monastery he went on a deputation to the Court, taking with him as a gift a ceremonial scarf and a rupee.[3] His 'grandfather' begged the Maharajah to excuse

● [431 177] [3] In Tibet and the neighbouring countries which have been influenced by its customs all formal occasions and gift-giving are accompanied by the present or exchange of a ceremonial scarf; this is a long piece of cloth, varying, according to the means and disposition of the giver, between butter muslin and the finest silk. In gifts from an inferior to a superior, or between equals if the giver wishes to flatter the recipient, one or more coins are given with the scarf. In the strictly graded society of Tibet there are infinite nuances in the

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622 Chala from accompanying him abroad, explaining that the young man was to be his heir and that he, the 'grandfather,' was getting old and past his work and wanted Chala to help him. The Maharajah granted the request; he put a scarf round Chala's neck and presented him with a coat and length of cloth and gave him a certificate confirming him in the office of Mandal.

Chala Mandal is completely illiterate; he has never learned to read or write; he has, he says, to carry everything, all the accounts and the personal relationships and the long stories he knows and tells 'in his heart and belly.' He must not drink too much *chi* or his memory would go. In a very real way the Mandal has acted as 622 uncle for almost all his tenants, for, in the last twenty years, he has 584 arranged every marriage except two in the neighbourhood. He does not plan in advance; when he thinks a boy or girl ripe for marriage he looks round for a suitable partner and then makes the suggestion to the child's uncles; if the arrangement is satisfactory to both parties the lamas consult the horoscopes to see if the projected marriage will turn out well and the arrangements are proceeded with. Even today when he is growing old he still has to arrange every marriage, in spite of the long marches which the rôle of *bek-bu*, or marriage arranger, entails. Chala Mandal also regulates most of the private affairs of his villagers, scolding and helping if they are extravagant or quarrelsome, or unco-operative; he is called into consultation and consults others on any affair of moderate importance.

622 With me he pretended to be extremely diffident but was obviously 538 pleased with the respect I paid him; all the visits which we paid one another started out somewhat ceremoniously, though after a few minutes he would settle down and gossip and tell stories happily. He was an extremely good story teller with an astonishing memory; as well as the more serious mythology he would tell comic fables and anecdotes extremely well, mimicking the various voices and actions with most humorous precision; one of my most vivid memories is of him representing a rather foolish female devil consulting the oracle of her pubic hair which waved about in

[43] manner of giving and receiving scarves to indicate the social distance between the two parties.
177 This giving of a scarf and coin, either alone, or with other gifts, has been completely accepted by the Lepchas, and will be found as a constantly recurring theme in sociological payments, such as marriage, and also often in sacrifices to the supernatural.

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the first place by the boy's *bek-bu*, acting under the uncle's instructions; he visits the girl's village, going to some strange house, and inquires who is the man who will act as the girl's *bek-bu*. The girl's *bek-bu* then acts as intermediary between the boy's *bek-bu* and the girl's 'uncle'.

When a son-in-law is proposed some representative of the girl is always sent to the boy's village to inquire about his character, whether he is peaceful and a good worker; formerly tests of felling wood used to be imposed. Some parents take into account the prospective property of the boy, but personal appearance and the relative age of the two parties are not generally considered. The more pious lamas will only consider lamas as suitable sons-in-law. Care has to be taken that neither party suffers under any hereditary taint.[7]

It usually happens that the boy and girl do not know one another at all before the betrothal; occasionally however a boy and girl who know one another wish to marry; in such cases the boy approaches either his uncle or his *bek-bu* and ask him to enter into negotiations. When widowers with property remarry this is always the case; and usually the man will have already impregnated his wife before the first overtures are made.

There is a distinct tendency for several members of two families or neighbourhoods to marry each other; once one woman from a strange community is brought into a village, she is liable to establish further contacts between members of her old community and those of her new one; and, provided the rules of a descent are not infringed, there is a tendency for a woman's daughters to marry back into their mother's old village. It is quite common for two siblings of one family to marry two siblings of another, whether it be two brothers marrying two sisters, or an exchange of sisters, each brother marrying the sister of the other. The marriage of two people does not affect the subsequent marriages of their families in the same generation in any way, but it is considered preferable for, say, the elder brother of the groom to marry the elder sister of the bride, and the younger, the younger; contrary arrangements are not forbidden, but they involve a readjustment of relationships which is felt to be awkward and uncomfortable, and I never came across nor heard of such an arrangement. In the case of the exchange of daughters the full marriage presents are meant to be given on both sides, and this is nearly always done, though in

[7] See Chapter Five, note 12, p. 139.

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582 point of fact it comes to an exchange of identical goods. The formal
● 431 marriage gifts are always meant to be new and unused; and it is a point of honour for all those who can afford to give them to do so.

584 The length of the period between *asék* and marriage varies between a few weeks and a few years according to the wealth of the people providing the marriage feast. In the case of young people this is entirely provided by their families and does not entail any feeling of indebtedness nor does the expense have to be repaid; it is an absolute gift, a further link in the chain of mutual benefits which bind Lepchas together. This is not the case if men of property wish to marry or re-marry; they have to provide the expense themselves and if they borrow from others they have to repay what they borrow. In the case of poor people who wish to marry there are two possible solutions; from a suitable groom the girl's parents may consent to receive the symbolical gift of a piece of roast meat (*akut*) instead of the proper *asék* presents, which represent a cash value of about Rs. 60; or the Mandal may advise and help the prospective groom to give a feast, at which all the neighbours will contribute in money or kind to pay for the marriage feast. In Lingthem this has been done twice in recent years. The cash value of the gifts, animals and grain demanded by the complete *asék* and marriage ceremonies is computed to be about Rs. 300. By far the greater part of this is involved in the food consumed at the marriage feast.

583 There is one other potential arrangement by which men without
597 much property or a large family can obtain a wife. In a family where there are no sons it is possible, if the parents so wish, that the groom, instead of taking the daughter away to his home, shall live permanently in the home of his parents-in-law, acting as their son, and eventually inheriting their property; in such cases only small *asék* presents are given and the expense of the lesser marriage feast is borne by the girl's family. But this arrangement is not very popular or very common; people do not much like the idea of having a stranger permanently in the home, and prefer either to adopt a young child, or else to let the property pass at their death to a *ké-tsop*;[8] and for most men the probable permanent separation from their families and friends is undesirable. This resident son-in-law is called *komok myok*. There are two men so situated in Lingthem, Tempa and Kurma *gyapön*, both somewhat maladjusted. Kurma is not a real stranger, for he was

[8] See Chapter Three, p. 106.

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(that is at a birth, certain moments in the marriage feast or at death) or in a house at which I was not welcome I would be told politely but firmly that I was not wanted.

My relationship with the Lepchas was, I thought, more intellectual than emotional; they quite liked and respected me, but did not feel about me at all. Consequently I was very surprised and moved when on my departure three of the people whom I had got to know best actually said goodbye to me with tears in their eyes and appeared genuinely sorry that I was leaving; this surprised me the more as Lepchas are not at all in the habit of dramatising emotions or situations; the only time I saw any of them cry was when two sisters broke into tears when a prayer-flag was set up in memory of a third sister who had recently died.

I do not think that my colour or appearance was the chief bar to emotional contact with the Lepchas; my habits were a more formidable obstacle, for I ate somewhat different foods, lived in a different way, and, above all was absurdly fussy about cleanliness, a completely meaningless concept to the Lepchas. But most important of all was the fact that I was alone, without wife or family or kin (it was generally believed that C. J. Morris was my father but for some obscure reason—probably because I was a bastard—we refused to acknowledge the relationship) and had no shared experiences with them; also, although present-giving on both sides was fairly constant, I naturally could not build up in the time a system of mutual benefits and obligations on which their own emotional relationships rest.

Present-giving forms a continual motive in Lepcha life. If you go as a guest to a feast you take a present with you, and you are given a present—usually some uncooked meat—to take away with you; if you go on a visit you take a present, and you are given a present on leave-taking. Casual visitors to another's house are always offered food and drink. Except for the formal gifts of *asék* and marriage these presents are really presents and not exchanges, except symbolically; it is a point of honour and gives a feeling of self-satisfaction to be able to give as good a gift as possible; and consequently when there is disproportion between the means of two people there is an equal disproportion between the gifts they give and receive.

I often found these gifts a subject of embarrassment, for the Lepchas would constantly try to overdo me in generosity, giving more than they could afford or I could want; particularly as

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practically the only present I could give was money, which is not of very great use to them. I had frequent tussles with them on the subject of payment for medical services; I insisted that medicine should not be paid for; they considered that it was shameful to take something for nothing and I frequently had to bully people with bad sores, which I knew I could cure easily, to come up for treatment; they were unwilling to do so because they thought they had nothing suitable to give as presents, and they were ashamed to take something for nothing. An interesting sidelight on their attitude towards gift-giving and strangers is shown by the behaviour of two of the bigger households who on my first arrival refused to sell to the servants either eggs or milk; and later when they got to know us used to come with presents of these commodities for which they refused to accept any return payment except after long argument.

When the Lepchas got to know me well they were not at all shy of asking for things; but except for cigarettes, betel nut and iodine or dressings for small cuts they always offered something in return for whatever they asked for and were in no way offended if their requests were refused. They were particularly attracted by illustrated papers and asked frequently to be given them; to a certain extent they recognised very clearly the objects portrayed in drawings and photographs, though their explanations to one another of the situations depicted were, as might well be imagined, very peculiar. I got far more amusement out of hearing three Lepchas explaining to one another what the pictures in *Punch* were about than I ever got out of reading that paper. One or two people asked for pictures of special subjects; Rigya kept on asking for pictures of war because 'he was amazed at them and had never seen or thought of anything like it'; Chudo liked pictures of cars and fashionable life, for he had spent nearly a year in Gangtok as scullion in the Maharajah's kitchens and knew about the lives of Europeans and was able to explain them to his less fortunate compatriots. For him European life consisted chiefly in extremely formal and uncomfortable meals at which there was never enough to eat, interspersed with quarrels of an extremely dramatic nature. In one of the numbers of the *Illustrated London News* there were several reproductions of Chinese Buddhist frescoes and there was quite a competition to possess these among the older and more pious lamas. After I had had some photos enlarged and had shown people their photos I was bombarded with requests for photos of individuals

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and groups; people used to come up dressed in their best clothes and stand very firmly at attention as if they were expecting to be shot any minute. A never failing source of amusement was looking through the view-finder of the camera, or, better still, field glasses; people would return again and again with their friends with demands to look through these wonderful appliances.

I had brought with me several packets of Japanese water flowers to amuse the children, and also in the hope of getting a lead as to whether they would interpret the sudden changes in these flowers in an animist fashion or not. The children quite liked looking at them but were not nearly as interested as their elders, who pointed out the changes taking place in the flowers in hushed and enthralled voices to the children and to each other. The children stared at them and said they were very pretty; when I asked 'who made them grow?' they said 'the water makes the flowers grow'; or else just 'the flowers bloom'. One child even corrected me when I said 'who makes the flowers grow', telling me I should say 'what makes the flowers grow'; and when I put leading questions asking whether gods or devils made the flowers grow they always replied in an emphatic negative. The children know about devils and are frightened of them and some of them have heard them; but the devils' and gods' spheres of action are rigorously defined and nothing which falls outside those spheres should be ascribed to them. What the children liked best about the flowers were the brightly coloured envelopes and the white paper they were contained in. They would treasure these most carefully and in the case of the paper would fold it up extremely neatly and tidily into small squares.

Lepcha children and Lepcha adults are extraordinarily unselfish; after a little experience I never bothered to divide collective gifts among them; I would give a packet of cigarettes or a handful of barley sugar to the person nearest to me, certain that it would be divided completely fairly among all present. Even with the Japanese flowers I would open a packet, show one child how to put the flowers in water and would then leave the open packet by the glass; one of the children would be sure to divide up the dry flowers equally among all present and if another child arrived later those who still had some flowers or paper would at once give a share to the new arrival. Except in the case of youngest or only children I never heard or saw children quarrel about the ownership of anything or the sharing of it. With little tots of three or four

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the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

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of birth. The mother is also washed on the third day and should be dressed in a new cloth, or if the family is especially poor, in a properly cleaned and good one. After this the mother is washed every three days for a month. The baby is washed in luke-warm water morning and evening. For the third-day feast the mother sits in a corner of the kitchen with the baby wrapped in a piece of white cloth on her lap.

The first person to arrive at the house must be a Mun; if a Mun has been employed to assist in delivery the same one must officiate at the birth feast. A chicken is killed and boiled and cut in half and placed on a *lafét* with other offerings. When the *lafét* is ready the guests arrive. If the child is a first child or a first son many people come; but for subsequent children, especially if a good number have been born, only perfunctory ceremonial visits are paid. If the child is a boy each guest will bring a scarf and Rs. 1, if a girl Rs. –/6.[3] Nearer relations of the parents may also bring presents of chickens or eggs or rice for the mother; the money will be spent on things for the child. After the presents are given, the Mun offers the sacrifice with a prayer to the Birth god (*gek rum*); he then waves an incense burner over all who are present, starting with the parents. Then the offerings on the *lafét* are eaten by all except the Mun. It is believed that the baby will only start to sleep properly after the ceremony has been performed.

For a male child an ox, or, failing that a pig or a goat, is killed for the feast; for a girl no animal is killed but bought meat is often added to the vegetables and rice provided for the guests. Only on one occasion is an ox killed for a girl; if the parents very much desire that the next child shall be a boy, and have the means, they dedicate an ox to Narzong-*nyou*, after which the Mun goes into deep meditation at his home to persuade the goddess to make the next child a son. During the feast every guest is given three *patyoot* of the special 'lying-in' *chi* and as much strained rice *chi* as they can drink. There are no formalities in the presentation of a new-born child to its relations and neighbours and no fixed remarks or attitudes. It is bad mannered to speak ill of a child but its resemblance to relations may be commented on. There are no preconceived theories of resemblance of siblings to each other or to their parents; but if a child looks strikingly like a man who is not

[3] No equivalents in kind were told to me for these cash presents, which suggests that the discrimination in favour of male children is of very recent origin.

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the characteristics of which no escape is possible. The "head sign" denotes that a child should become a Lama and when this is found the boy is always sent to a teacher. He may later decide that he does not wish to practise and in this case will cease to study. There is no objection to children without the "head sign" becoming Lamas; but if, for instance, a boy born with the "hand sign" wishes to enter the Church nothing can prevent him from eventually turning into a thief. If a girl is born with the "heart sign" it means she should become a female Lama; and it may be noted in passing that in both sexes the "genital sign" is thought to be a sure indication of future sexual promiscuity. These so-called "signs" are not actually visible on the body; they are merely the attributes attaching to birth at a particular time, and failure to comply with the conditions indicated is thought to result in a shortening of life. I think, however, that Lepchas do not attach much importance to them, and in actual practice the son of a Lama, whatever his "sign," will nearly always study for at least a few years.

It is said that when a child reaches the age of three or four it will try on its own to study. I personally never saw any such infant prodigies; and such small boys in Lingtem as were destined for the Church seemed much more interested in catapulting birds or playing around in the fields. The only difference between them and other children was in the yellow sash worn round their waists, the distinguishing mark, apart from close-cropped hair, of Lepcha Lamas, who in Lingtem do not ordinarily wear monastic robes but dress as laymen. When the novice is about eight or nine his parents select some experienced Lama as his teacher, and to him they send the boy with a present. This usually takes the form of a pig's carcass and a few rupees. A father never teaches his own son, except incidentally, but the teacher will nearly always be some man of the boy's own village. The novice generally lives with his teacher and receives instruction only at night, since both must spend the daylight hours working in the fields. Sometimes a boy will run away from his

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793 teacher and when this happens his father will beat him and send him back. A boy must study for three years before he can call himself a Yukman: but he is really no more than a probationer for several years to come. There is no examination at the end of the novitiate, but the pupil must be pronounced as fit by his master before proceeding further. Before a Yukman can be advanced in rank he must be passed as fit by the head of his monastery. This, however, is a mere matter of form and dependent entirely upon giving the necessary feasts. The position is almost exactly the same as that of the Oxford or Cambridge B.A., who has merely to pay a fee in order to become a Master of Arts: but in Lingtem the candidate is not required to pay in cash; he merely entertains the Senate to a feast of pork and drink.

As soon as a boy has finished his three years' course of study he is presented to the local monastery by two Lamas, for [431] whom he provides food and drink. In return they give him a ceremonial scarf and a present of one rupee. There is no actual ceremony, but this exchange of gifts constitutes the novice's graduation as a *Chap-dibu*, the lowest rank of Lama. He has no priestly functions and is little more than a servant to the other Lamas during such times as they are present at the monastery, seeing that their drinking cups are kept replenished, sweeping out the building and performing other such menial tasks. A *Chap-dibu* must remain about three years in this and each subsequent rank before he can be advanced, the next stage being known as *Tong-pön-bu*. To attain this rank the Lama must provide a feast of one pig, [273] eighty pounds of specially prepared dry millet for making *Chi*, the universal drink of Sikkim, and eighty pounds each of rice and parched rice. A *Tong-pön-bu* is not permitted to read from books during monastic ceremonies, but he may now [534] play on conch shells. He may also blow the funnel-shaped hautboy called *Galing*, also the long ten-foot trumpets, *Rukdung*, and the flutes, made from human thigh-bones known as *Kongling*. When playing on the conch shell he may, if he wishes, wear a special red cap called *Tongyo*. Should the

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of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth, which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray, together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given something to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to

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of Jongu have to deal. The reasons for it are not at all clear, but are possibly not unconnected with the people's sexual regulations, which will be discussed in detail later.

Nearly every ceremony and invocation ends with a request to be given children, and I well remember the last time we visited the Mandal's house. The ceremony I have already described had just been completed and he was escorting us up the path. We thanked him for his hospitality and told him that now that he had done the ceremony we were sure he would quickly recover his health. He smiled; and then suddenly became very serious. "If you really wish to give me a blessing," he said, "please pray that I may have a son. You could wish me nothing better than this: but I fear this boon will never be granted me."

Sterile couples sometimes make a pilgrimage to a monastery in order to be blessed by three Lamas. This is called *Mun lop-thop*. Many people have done it, but without result, and its efficacy is nowadays somewhat doubted. Better than this is to go to Luksom Partam, a tarn high up in the mountains, where the first birth of the human race is said to have occurred. On arrival at the place the husband and wife must copulate near the lake and offer a sacrifice on its banks; silver and precious stones should also be cast into the lake, if possible. On return to their home a Lama is called in to read the holy books and to offer grain and butter to the gods. In order to be effective the pilgrimage must be repeated in three successive years; but some people do it year after year in the hope of eventually getting a child. Of almost equal value is a ceremonial visit to the Talung Monastery. This is known as *Shaptok klong*. It consists in taking large quantities of *chi*, and rice, also the carcass of a pig, and offering them to the Lamas. It is said that the necessary gifts take at least ten men to carry them. On return from Talung the same Lama ceremony is performed as is necessary on return from Luksom Partam.

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585 This story is always told at Lepcha weddings, at the time the animal sacrifice is made, and explains why a copper pot, pig, and other articles always form part of the marriage gifts. It was told me by the Mandal, who learnt it from his father when he was a young man. It is known to all Muns, but not by many "ordinary" people.

584 [576] When it is wished to arrange a marriage the parents of the boy concerned must first send for a *Pi-bo*, or go-between, as it is not etiquette to conduct the preliminaries in person. The meaning of this word is literally "a nicely-spoken person," which, in view of the use made of elegant periphrases during the course of the actual marriage ceremonies, well describes the duties of the office. The *Pi-bo* may be any suitable experienced man; but in actual practice, in Lingtem, it is nearly always the Mandal.

584 ● 431 The parents now prepare a special ceremonial gift known as *Khachyong*, which consists of eight pounds of fermented chi-millet, one rupee, and a Tibetan ceremonial scarf. If the last is not available six annas in cash may be sent in its place.

584 The *Khachyong* is taken by the boy's *Pi-bo* to the house of some near relative of the selected girl, usually to a brother of one or other of her parents; but in no circumstances may it be presented to the girl's parents direct. Having arrived at the village the *Pi-bo* ascertains from the girl's relative who will act as her go-between, after which the two men visit him and hand over the *Khachyong*. In return for this present the girl's *Pi-bo* promises to see what he can do in the matter, and the boy's representative then returns to his own home. All this, of course, is a mere formality, since in most cases it has been previously ascertained, perhaps years before, that the proposed marriage is acceptable to all concerned.

The girl's *Pi-bo* keeps the chi-millet for himself, but takes the rupee and the scarf to the girl's parents and discusses the proposed marriage with them. It is the custom for them at first to refuse, giving as excuse that the boy is too poor, or not of good enough family. The *Pi-bo* continues to plead with them, and if unsuccessful in gaining their consent he returns

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bamboo of which is put down in front of each of the guests. 585
As soon as the guests have somewhat collected themselves a 585
meal of bullock's lights is served; it seems to me a most 262
unsuitable dish to offer at dawn on the "morning after."
When this delicacy has been disposed of a further meal of
rice, vegetables, and so on, in fact the ordinary daily fare, is
served. This is followed by yet another dish known as *Alook*
Zo, which consists of rice and ribs of beef. It is served to
everybody present; but each member of the bride's party
receives a piece of raw beef to take home. This is placed on
top of the dish of cooked food and is known as *Mangkar*. It is
as though, when one goes out to dinner, one finds a juicy raw
chop resting on top of the savoury, which one quietly
removes and puts in one's pocket. I think it a nice idea.

In the meantime still another bullock, called *Myok Long*, has 585
been tied up a little distance from the house, and to this spot
such members of the party as are still capable of walking now
proceed. When they get there the bridegroom tells them that
the animal has cost him thirty rupees. A certain amount of
argument now follows, in which various men express their
opinion as to the real worth of the animal; and if the general
opinion is that it is not really worth more than, say, twenty-
five rupees, then the bridegroom must pay the difference in
cash to the bride's attendants. The *Rum fat-bo* is now
summoned. He is presented with one rupee and a scarf and
sits down near the bullock, with a bamboo of *chi* at his side.
He offers the animal to the gods and demons, meanwhile the
bride's younger brother kills it with a bow and arrow.

The bride and bridegroom now come and stand before the
Mun. "From now on," he says to them, "live peaceably
together; or failing this may you be gored by a bullock like
this one now lying dead in front of us." To this little speech
he adds his personal congratulations and tells the bride that
he hopes she will be blessed with at least six boys and six girls.

The party now returns to the house, and there then follows 585
a ceremony called *Ong Kay*. A large plate is put in the middle 431
of the principal room, and into this the bridegroom's parents,

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585 or anyone standing in their place, put a ceremonial scarf and
431 one rupee. After this everyone present, with the exception of the bride's official attendants, puts in a coin according to his means or desire, the amounts varying from five rupees down to an anna or two. An average sum collected in this way would amount, so I was told, to about forty rupees; but it is not uncommon for as much as one hundred rupees to be
585 collected in the *Ong Kay*. The money is distributed as
466 follows:

Kegu Nunbu	Five rupees
Rum fat-bo	Four rupees
Aku	Four rupees
Ajyong	Four rupees
Changku	Three rupees
Nyom Moo	Six rupees
Nyom Chimbu	Three rupees
Nyom Faming	Three rupees
Faming tyol	Three rupees
Load-carriers	Eight annas each

The ceremonial scarf contributed by the bridegroom's parents is given to the bride, but she does not receive any of the money. If the amount collected at the *Ong Kay* is insufficient for the above payments, the balance must be made up by the bridegroom, who, alternatively, retains any balance.

The bridegroom now pays six rupees to his wife's *Pi-bo* and five rupees to his own, and gives to each a ceremonial scarf. At the same time each receives some eight pounds of mixed beef and pork. After this some man of standing in the village takes the two *Pi-bos* aside: he tells them that in arranging this marriage they have possibly been put to considerable trouble, and have doubtless had to suffer many insults. He adds that all is now successfully over, and he hopes that neither will take umbrage at anything that may have happened. The two men assure him that all is well, thank
[431] him for his remarks and give him a couple of annas each.

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This little ceremony, if it can be dignified by such a name, is called *Pi-bo azom*. 585 431

This completes the second day's proceedings; but, as before, drinking and conversation are continued well into the night. At about one a.m. one of the *Pi-bos* goes round with a large bowl of the special ceremonial unstrained *chi* and offers it to each of those present. As before, it is not consumed: it is merely offered as an indication that the day's ceremonies are over and that everyone should from then onwards at least talk quietly if he does not wish to sleep. 585

On the third morning everyone is again wakened with a bowl of *chi*. Lights, however, are not again served, but on this occasion all the guests are given *Tum cheu*, or the entrails of the bullock killed the day before, stuffed with meat of various kinds. These are prepared by the *Changku*, who, as we have already noted, is in entire charge of the distribution of meat. This meal of sausage is followed by another of ordinary rice and vegetables, on top of which is put a hunk of raw beef for each member of the bride' party. As her attendants leave for home each one tears a bit off the joint he has received and returns it to the donor: this symbolises the presentation of a return gift. 585 262

The marriage is now over and the bridegroom makes ready to escort the bride, together with all her attendants, back to her home. Before they leave they are presented with a special gift of food called *Lom-to Lom-chong*, which consists of eight pounds of chi-millet and eight pounds of rice. This is meant to be consumed on the way back; but even if the two houses are only a few hundred yards apart the present must be given just the same. The party also takes with it a present known as *Dong-chong Dong-len*, which consists of a load of chi-millet for the bride's parents. 585 431

When the party reaches the girl's home the bride and bridegroom remain there for either three or seven days; but they must on no account leave on any of the intervening days, which are considered inauspicious. When they finally leave for the husband's home they are given a present called 585 591 431

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585 *Gor-nen*, which is made up of sixteen pounds of grain of various
591 sorts and one complete load of chi-millet. As soon as the pair
[431] reach home the *Gor shun*, which, as we have already seen, was specially constructed for the accommodation of the bride's party, is knocked down without further ceremony; but it should on no account be demolished until the husband returns with his wife.

591 Seven days later husband and wife once again set off for
[431] the girl's home, taking with them the inevitable load of chi-millet, and eight pounds of grain. Nothing is laid down as to when they should return; and from this time the pair continues to divide its time between the two houses, or at least to pay periodical visits to the girl's home.

[431] One year after marriage a girl may, if she feels so disposed, present her parents with a pig's carcass and another load of chi-millet. This is known as *Nyim phet;* and when it is given it is customary for the parents to make a return present of a milch cow: this is called *Pi jong*. The cow is not, however, actually given to the girl but is merely shown her. If she gives her parents another *Nyim phet* the following year the *Pi jong* becomes her property and she may then take the cow away with her when she leaves.

585 Whatever we may think of Lepcha marriage, it does at
571 least afford a chance for the village to break away for a day or two from its otherwise dull routine, and gives people from distant villages an excuse to meet and talk things over. Moreover, everybody knows exactly what he is expected to contribute: in lean times the dictates of custom are sufficiently observed by putting as little as a couple of annas in the *Ong kay*. But in any case the guest is free from our periodic nightmare of "what shall I give?"; and the bride and bridegroom in their turn are spared an accumulation of the Lepcha equivalent of unwanted plated cruets. It all seems admirably contrived; and a good time is had by all.

587 14*th March:*

Ongden, a man of fifty and the father of the largest family

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but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

* * * * *

Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

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of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marrying additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

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3 pounds of rice, served in two portions.

3 bamboo containers of *chi*, each one refilled with hot water as soon as emptied and as often as any strength remains in the millet. The general effect of this is roughly equivalent to about eight bottles of fairly strong beer. This represents the average daily consumption by most men and women: topers drink considerably more than this, children rather less.

4 bowls of tea.

2 handfuls of parched grain.

2 portions of meat; one served with the rice, the other given raw to take home at the end of the day.

Soup, as demanded.

3 small cups of strained spirit, each one roughly equivalent to a double portion of neat whisky.

To-day's feast has cost Tafoor and his co-host about thirty rupees each in actual cash; but most of the food and drink, of course, was provided from the family store. He bought the meat and also an ox's skin from Tempa; but if everybody in the village turned up a whole ox would have been necessary. In addition to the above most people brought contributions of vegetables and odds and ends of spices. Incidentally, the skin of an animal is considered a particular delicacy, and I saw several people hard at work chewing the bits of raw ox skin. It looked like, as indeed it was, leather, so the threat of eating one's boots would appear to be no idle boast in Jongu. Tafoor says that high pork is also very nice; goat, however, should always be eaten fresh. Slightly high beef is extremely good. In summer it can only be kept for three or four days, but in winter it will last as long as a month: it is at its best after about a week. People never throw high meat away; but if maggoty it is liable to make one ill. Apart from this the higher meat is, the better it tastes, except in the case of game birds, which should only be eaten fresh: *de gustibus non est disputandum.*

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789 stop it altogether. Unfortunately, it is not possible to get the Mandal, for instance, to make the request on behalf of another in order to ensure success; and there appears to be no means by which one can tell whether one's mind is in accord with that of the Lama or not; one must take the risk and hope for the best.

791 Tafoor's usual fee is twelve pounds of *chi* millet for stopping rain for a period of three days, whatever the result; but if successful it is usual to give him a further eighty pounds of grain when the crops which were sown during the period in which he kept the rain away are harvested. Should he exercise his powers on behalf of the whole village no payment is made in kind, but the others will work his fields for him: this is equivalent to about two days' work from each person concerned.

789 After setting out his altar with lamps, incense, and so on he must look at the sky very intensely and attempt to drive any clouds away by the power of his thoughts; he must continue to do this as each fresh cloud appears. He must start to do this at dawn; and even if no clouds appear he should concentrate on keeping them away at four p.m., nine p.m., and at one the following morning. It is not possible to compromise by stopping the rain only during the daylight hours; it can only be stopped altogether or not at all. While Tafoor is concentrating he must not talk to anyone and should remain quiet and thoughtful; but once he has set the machinery in motion, so to speak, there is no objection to carrying on with his ordinary occupations, but he must not go out and work in the fields.

* * * * *

574 I was all packed up and ready to start by seven, but it took
431 some time to take leave of the village, which turned up in force to see me off. Nearly everyone brought a parting present, as a result of which I left Lingtem with enough chickens to start a poultry farm, and sufficient milk to bathe in. I was greatly touched by the people's kindness, but their

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presents could not possibly have arrived at a less inconvenient 574
moment. We eventually left at about ten o'clock, in pouring 431 ●
rain, and to the accompaniment of the monastery band, which went with us for about a quarter of a mile. Tafoor told me not to worry about the weather: he has set everything out and it will certainly be fine to-morrow.

We reached Lungdeum in a couple of hours, after which 487
the path degenerated into the very roughest of tracks through the forest, climbing up and down a great deal. In a number of places the hillsides were too steep for an ordinary path, and here and there narrow lengths of sliced bamboo had been fastened across the cliff face. These are easily negotiable in dry weather by anyone walking barefoot; but a real death-trap when wet to anyone wearing nailed boots, as a false step is liable to precipitate one at least twenty or thirty feet down the hillside, and may even have more serious consequences. The Lepchas laughed at my extremely clumsy efforts to retain my balance. Rubber-soled shoes are the best type of footgear for this sort of work; but in wet weather they merely add to one's difficulties. For anyone who is unaccustomed to walk barefoot it would probably be best to wear a couple of pairs of thick socks or stockings and discard one's boots; they do at least give a good grip on the slippery bamboo planks.

By four o'clock we had dropped down to the river, which 491
had to be crossed before the final climb up to the camping site at the entrance to the narrow valley that leads up to the monastery. Most of the coolies, who had left Lingtem a long time before me, were waiting on the other side, perhaps in order to have a good laugh at me crossing the bridge. I must confess that I find these Lepcha bridges most terrifying. They are made of heavy strands of cane, joined together and anchored to huge trees on either side of the river. The two main strands also serve as a handrail, and from them smaller canes are suspended at intervals so as to form a series of U-shaped loops. Into these loops long lengths of sliced bamboo are placed end to end. These form the actual

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
[386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collection comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
● [431] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769, ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Dsöngpön" (rdzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
[523] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, decorated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
[796] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named: amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
[766] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --, a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing ceremonies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of the priests during which they used magic.